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THE WORLD'S WAR AGAINST CONSUMPTION

COMPILED BY L. L. DOCK

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IN June last Dr. Knopf read an article before the National Conference of Charities and Correction which should be spread broadcast, to arouse not only the intellectual and scientific forces of society, but also that humanitarian and social sympathy and fellow-feeling which form so striking a feature of his own propaganda. We give some extracts from this address as follows:

"Tuberculosis is only in the rarest instances transmitted from parent to child. When an infant becomes tuberculous it is usually the result of an infection after birth from a careless or ignorant tuberculous mother or other consumptive adult. The disposition to tuberculosis can, of course, be inherited as well as acquired.

"We now know that tuberculosis, especially in its pulmonary form, is an infectious and communicable disease. I lay stress upon the word communicable, for I do not classify pulmonary tuberculosis with the dangerous contagious diseases, and I shall give you briefly my reasons for not doing so. It is my firm conviction, based on the experiences and experiments of our greatest European and American scientists, such as Koch, Straus, Grancher, Prudden, Biggs, and others, and on a somewhat extensive experience of my own, that tuberculosis is not a dangerous contagious disease, but only a communicable one. To be in contact with a tuberculous individual who takes care of his expectoration or other secretions which may contain the bacilli is not dangerous. In sanatoria for consumptives, where the precautions concerning the sputum are most strictly adhered to, one is perhaps safer from contracting tuberculosis than anywhere else. The great danger from infection lies in the indiscriminate deposit of sputum containing the bacilli, which, when dry and pulverized, may be inhaled by susceptible individuals and then cause the disease to be developed. The communication of the germ of the disease is, however, less obscure to us in its process and far more easily guarded against than the contagion arising from such maladies as diphtheria, scarlet fever, or smallpox. What has just been said concerning the absolute security from infection in a well-kept sanatorium cannot very well be said of a smallpox hospital, no matter how well directed the hygienic precautions may be. Against the danger from contracting smallpox we have thus far no other means than preventive vaccination, and in case of an outbreak of the disease the most rigid isolation. It is entirely different with tuberculosis. The simple contact of a smallpox

patient may suffice to convey the disease. This is never possible with a consumptive, even should he be careless or unclean. To the average individual a prolonged exposure is necessary to the transmission of the disease. Herein lies the difference between communicable and contagious. . . .

"It is now almost universally known to the medical profession, as well as to many of the laity, that tuberculosis in its pulmonary form can be cured in nearly all climates where the extremes of temperature are not too pronounced and where the air is relatively pure and fresh. In other words, it is not always necessary for a consumptive patient to travel long distances and seek special climatic conditions. In most instances he has a chance of getting well even in his home climate. The sooner the patient puts himself under the care of a competent physician, the greater are his chances of recovery. The well-trained physician is the most competent person to guide the patient in the means to prevent reinfection of himself or the infection of his fellow-men. The most modern and most successful methods of treating consumption consist solely and exclusively in the scientific and judicious use of fresh air, sunshine, water, abundant and good food, and the help of certain medicinal substances when the just mentioned hygienic and dietetic means do not suffice in themselves to combat the disease. The thorough and constant supervision of the pulmonary invalid, the immediate intervention when new symptoms manifest themselves or old ones become aggravated or do not disappear rapidly enough, the prescription of proper food and drink, can only be had at the hands of the thoroughly trained physician, in the patient's home, or in a well-equipped sanatorium specially constructed for that purpose.

(To be continued.)

OPEN-AIR TREATMENT FOR CONSUMPTIVES IN IRELAND

BY RACHEL BOURKE

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WHEN on a vacation last summer, part of which I spent travelling in Ireland, the extreme beauty of the surroundings of The Consumptives' Home, Newcastle, County Wicklow, and the fact that it was devoted to the cure of tuberculosis tempted me to break a resolution I had formed not again to visit hospitals in Britain when on a holiday, as had been my custom, to see new methods and gain experience.

Thinking my impressions of this sanitarium might be interesting to readers of the "Green Book," I jotted them down, the more readily as there is such a widespread interest present at this time in the cure of this disease.